

## Forest Trees of Australia

by D Boland and eight other authors

Publisher: CSIRO Publishing, 2006 (Fifth Edition). 768 pages, Hardback, 81 colour photographs, hundreds of black and white photographs. ISBN 0643069690. RRP \$125.00

*Forest Trees of Australia* first came on the botanical scene just fifty years ago. It was a relatively slim book covering just 67 species for the whole of Australia—all eucalypts, and even then, little more than a tenth of the eucalypt species count. Its title, and the originating authority (Forestry and Timber Bureau, Canberra), indicate its primary criteria for species selection, namely trees of economic value for their timber.

It was first published in 1957, and I owned an early copy, now long since vanished. In spite of its limited coverage for our area, it used a design style which I had always wanted in books of this type—a consistent treatment of every species with logical, systematic, concise descriptions, and clear, comprehensive illustrations, all on one page or spread, making it easy to compare species.

It also had another much-longed-for feature—distribution maps.

It was this book that inspired me to use a similar style of presentation, albeit simpler, in the first publication of *Trees of Victoria* in 1966.

Over subsequent editions, the number and diversity of genera and species steadily grew, as did the weight and price of the book, but the well-proven style of presentation has changed little.

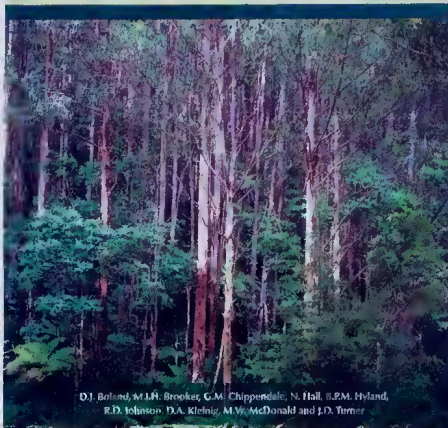
This 5th edition gives its criteria for species inclusion as ‘important to the timber industry, conspicuous in the landscape, of environmental value, or of ornamental interest’. In its 768 pages, it describes 178 eucalypts and 121 non-eucalypts (pines, sheoaks, figs, wattles, melaleucas, banksias, palms and many others).

The descriptions for every species incorporate comprehensive environmental information, associates, related species and taxonomic background as well as detailed description of all plant parts.

The photographs clearly illustrate all the critical plant parts and are in black and

## FOREST TREES OF AUSTRALIA

FIFTH EDITION



white. However, there are also about 80 colour plates of forest types and bark characteristics in the front of the book, preceding a 33-page introduction covering geology, summaries of the main tree families, and environmental and distribution factors. The book concludes with a good glossary supported by line illustrations.

What makes the 5th edition different from the 4th (1984)? Apart from the inclusion of 72 additional species treatments (including the unique and much publicised Wollemi Pine), there are many new photographs (including scanning electron micrographs), updated taxonomy, new supporting chapters, and revised distribution maps. The latter are ‘spotted’ from records, but at the scale of the maps can give only a broad picture compared with, say, *Flora of Victoria*.

Updating of taxonomy is an ongoing issue in any botanical publication, especially as some name changes come down to an individual botanist’s opinion. For example, while most authorities have finally accepted *Corymbia* as a genus separate from *Eucalyptus* in the same way as *Angophora*, this book does not adopt this change (but does give *Corymbia* in synonymy). Hence the ‘*Corymbia* confusion’ continues!

My recommendation? There is no doubt that this is an accurate, reliable and well-presented book. Whether one would want

to pay the \$125 depends on where one's interest in trees lies. From a Victorian viewpoint, most of the additional species are in remote parts of Australia, some with very restricted natural distribution; I couldn't see any extra species for the Victorian area. On the other hand, for the species it does treat, this book gives more informa-

tion on environmental factors and timber characteristics than any other, and if this is interesting or important to the reader, the book is certainly recommended.

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## Wild Neighbours: The humane approach to living with wildlife

by Ian Temby; illustrated by Elisabeth Bastian

Publisher: *Citrus Press, Broadway, NSW, 2005. 250 pages. Paperback ISBN 0975102354. RRP \$36.00*



Have you ever had to deal with problem faunal species sharing your house and backyard? This book has all the answers for dealing with a complete range of would-be sharers from bandicoots to wombats and butcherbirds to wattlebirds. Even spiders rate a chapter in this comprehensive coverage of the creatures of our neighbourhoods.

Part 1 is a general coverage with sections on conflict resolution, to feed or not to feed, health issues, and tools and tactics to be used. Part 2 expands this. Each species or species group is assigned a chapter, which provides descriptions and background information on the species, their

habitats and diets and their reproductive strategies. The problems that arise and suggestions for resolving these problems are discussed under the headings Tolerance, Exclusion, Repellents and Live Trapping. Tolerance is always the preferred option, whilst live trapping is not recommended except in extreme cases, and only where permitted by government agency or licensed operator.

Temby is sympathetic to wildlife, particularly species that may not be appreciated by humans, such as crows and ravens which are noted for their intelligence and problem-solving ability, or spiders, which 'can be considered a chemical free pest control service' and snakes, which are often senselessly killed regardless of their importance to the ecosystem. Often a species, such as Masked Lapwing, is admired for its successful adaptation to the urban environment.

Introduced species are also included, and while we may deplore their spread and displacement of our native species, they still add interest to a bland structured streetscape.

This is a very informative and useful book peppered with the author's humorous comments and anecdotal stories of interactions with wildlife. Overall, the emphasis is on how lucky we are to have native wildlife that is willing to share our habitat with us.

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